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Homeland Security: Roles and Missions for United States Northern Command

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Homeland Security: Roles and Missions for United States Northern Command

Summary

In 2002, President Bush signed a new Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishing United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM) to provide command and control of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) homeland defense efforts and to coordinate military support to civil authorities. As a geographical combatant command, NORTHCOM has an area of responsibility that includes the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and surrounding waters out to approximately 500 nautical miles, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida. The NORTHCOM Commander also commands North American Aerospace Defense Command.

NORTHCOM, headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, employs approximately 1,200 DOD civilians, contractors, and service members from each service component. The Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps have service components assigned to NORTHCOM, while Navy Fleet Forces Command is a supporting component. Additionally, NORTHCOM maintains five subordinate joint headquarters to carry out assigned missions.

One of NORTHCOM's key charters is to build ongoing relationships with government agencies that play a role in homeland security and defense. To ensure integration of homeland security and defense efforts, NORTHCOM participates in the Joint Interagency Coordination Group while also working closely with both the Department of Homeland Security and the National Guard Bureau. To exercise these important relationships, NORTHCOM participates in the National Exercise Program. Further, as a geographical combatant command, NORTHCOM also plays a key role in facilitating military cooperation with both Canada and Mexico.

During deliberations for the FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act, some issues for Congress involving NORTHCOM may include DOD reorganization and the Unified Command Plan, improving interagency relationships, NORTHCOM's increased reliance on reserve component service members, the ongoing Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center realignment, and the allocation of resources necessary for NORTHCOM to successfully plan for and execute its assigned missions.

This report will be updated as conditions require.

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Homeland Security: Roles and Missions for United States Northern Command

Introduction

This report outlines the organizational structure of United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM), explains how NORTHCOM contributes to homeland security through the interagency process, and summarizes NORTHCOM's international relationships with Canada and Mexico. Some issues for Congress involving NORTHCOM include DOD reorganization and the Unified Command Plan, improving interagency relationships, NORTHCOM's increased reliance on reserve component service members, the ongoing Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center realignment, and the allocation of resources necessary for NORTHCOM to successfully plan for and execute its assigned missions.

Background

In 2002, President Bush signed a new Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishing NORTHCOM.[1] NORTHCOM is a regional combatant command with an area of responsibility (AOR) that includes the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and surrounding waters out to approximately 500 nautical miles, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida.[2] NORTHCOM's mission is to "anticipate and conduct Homeland Defense and Civil Support operations within the assigned area of responsibility to defend, protect, and secure the United States and its interests."[3] The NORTHCOM Commander also commands North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a bi-national U.S. and Canadian organization charged with air and maritime warning and airspace control.[4]

Organization

NORTHCOM, headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, employs approximately 1,200 DOD civilians, contractors, and service members from each service component. Most U.S. military personnel also serve in NORAD positions,

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[1] See Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-26, "Homeland Security," August 2, 2005, II-7, for combatant command roles in Homeland Security.

[2] Hawaii and Pacific territories and possessions are in U.S. Pacific Command AOR, while Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are in U.S. Southern Command's AOR.

[3] "About NORTHCOM," online at [http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html].

[4] NORAD and NORTHCOM are separate entities. NORAD was established by treaty, and in May 2006, NORAD's maritime warning mission was added.

except in the operations directorate. Like other combatant commands, NORTHCOM has relatively few permanently assigned personnel to manage routine operations. Rather, when tasked by the National Command Authority to conduct specific homeland defense or civil support operations, NORTHCOM would be assigned forces from U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM).[5]

NORTHCOM has several subordinate commands to execute its mission. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps components are assigned to NORTHCOM, while Navy Fleet Forces Command is a supporting component. These service component commands provide an administrative framework to command service forces gained from JFCOM for specific contingency operations. Additionally, five Joint Task Forces (JTF) have been established to provide operational organizational skeletons to oversee forces to be assigned for actual operations. The following summarizes direct-reporting NORTHCOM components:

Army North (ARNORTH). Based at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, 5th Army assumed responsibility for its NORTHCOM mission in October 2005. Commanded by an active duty three-star general, this organization shed its traditional role of training reservists to focus on supporting civil authorities. It assigns Defense Coordinating Officers (DCO) to all 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regional offices to streamline DOD coordination. During crisis response, DCOs are augmented by additional personnel to facilitate NORTHCOM support.[6]

Air Force North (AFNORTH). First Air Force is headquartered at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, and in February 2006, it was designated as NORTHCOM's air component or AFNORTH. The organization is commanded by an Air National Guard two-star general who also serves as commander of the Continental NORAD Region — one of three NORAD regions.[7] Key subordinate units to AFNORTH include the following:

- 601st Air and Space Air Operations Center, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.
- Northeast Air Defense Sector, Rome, New York.
- Western Air Defense Sector, McChord Air Force Base, Washington.

In addition, AFNORTH includes nine aligned Air National Guard fighter wings that fly aircraft such as the F-22 Raptor, F-15 Eagle, F-16 Fighting Falcon, and the E-3 Sentry.[8] In addition to using aircraft on alert, the AFNORTH is expanding the

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[5] Testimony of Commander, U.S. Northern Command, Admiral Timothy J. Keating, before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 14, 2006.

[6] "Theater-level Command Expands Homeland Security Mission," *Homeland Defense Watch*, October 25, 2005.

[7] NORAD maintains three regions — Alaskan NORAD Region, Canadian NORAD Region, and Continental NORAD Region, For more on NORAD's structure, see [http://www.norad.mil/about/index.html].

[8] USAF Fact Sheet: AFNORTH Mission, April 2008, AFNORTH Public Affairs, online at

(continued...)

use of mobile ground-based air defense systems and unmanned aerial vehicles. It also maintains a joint air surveillance system with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).[9]

Since September 11, 2001, First Air Force has been the lead agency for Operation Noble Eagle — the continuing mission to protect the United States from terrorist air attack. AFNORTH accomplishes this task by providing surveillance and command and control for air defense forces 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.[10] As of May 1, 2008, AFNORTH had executed 48,950 sorties and logged 188,553 flying hours during Operation Noble Eagle over the continental United States.[11]

Marine Forces North (MARFORNORTH). In the fall of 2004, DOD designated Marine Forces Reserve Command in New Orleans, Louisiana, as a NORTHCOM component. The reserve three-star Marine commander is responsible for force-protection of Marine installations and coordinating Marine forces assigned to NORTHCOM. Additionally, to assist NORTHCOM civil support planning, the command has 32 Marine Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers focused on specific FEMA regions. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, 20 of the 32 liaison officers worked in various FEMA, DOD, and state operations centers to coordinate Marine support.[12]

Joint Task Force North (JTF-N). Established in September 2004, JTF-N aids law enforcement agencies protecting U.S. borders. The Fort Bliss, Texas-based unit inherited 15 years of interagency experience from its predecessor JTF-6. Whereas JTF-6 assisted with counter-drug operations on the southern border, JTF-N now has a broader homeland defense focus as it integrates military capabilities with federal, state and local law enforcement. In addition to exercises and planning, JTF-N operations include reconnaissance, surveillance, detection, and infrastructure construction missions that often leverage military units training for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.[13]

Standing Joint Forces Headquarters North (SJFHQ-N). Headquartered at Peterson AFB, Colorado, SJFHQ-N began operations in January 2004. Its mission is to maintain situational awareness across NORTHCOM's area of responsibility.

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[8] (...continued)
[http://www.1af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4107].

[9] Carlos Munoz, "AFNORTH Will Rely More on Ground Based Mobile Defense Systems," *Inside the Air Force*, July 7, 2006, vol. 7, no. 27.

[10] USAF Fact Sheet: AFNORTH Mission, April 2008, AFNORTH Public Affairs, online at [http://www.1af.acc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4107].

[11] "Never-ending Vigil: Operation Noble Eagle Sorties and Flying Hourse," *Air Force Magazine.com Datapoints*, May 19, 2008, online at [http://www.airforce-magazine.com/datapoints/2008/Pages/dp052008one.aspx].

[12] Statement of Commander, Marine Forces North, Lt General Jack W. Bergman, before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, July 19, 2006.

[13] Statement of Director of Operations, Joint Task Force North, Col. Paul R. Disney, to the House Armed Services Committee, August 1, 2006.

SJFHQ-N is designed to provide command and control for contingency situations, and has the ability to forward deploy elements when required.[14]

Joint Task Force Alaska (JTF-AK). JTF-AK is headquartered at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, and is tasked to coordinate land defense and DOD support to civil authorities in Alaska.[15]

Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS). Headquartered at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, this JTF assists the lead federal agency managing the consequences of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive incident in the United States or its territories and possessions. It was established in 1999 under U.S. Joint Forces Command, and its coordination with agencies like FEMA is more mature. The JTF is also working with state National Guard civil support teams as they become operational.[16]

Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR). Activated in June 2003, this JTF is located at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. It facilitates planning, training, and exercising among four local service components. Additionally, it coordinates with Coast Guard District 5, the DHS Office of National Capitol Region, and other federal, state, and local agencies to ensure unity of effort in the event of manmade or natural catastrophes.[17]

Interagency Relationships

NORTHCOM's linkage to homeland security is through Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) mission. As such, NORTHCOM participates in the Joint Interagency Coordination Group and maintains strong relationships with the Department of Homeland Security and the National Guard. Finally, NORTHCOM is and active participant in National Level Exercises (NLE) and, along with the rest of DOD, has synchronized its exercise schedule with the National Exercise Plan.

Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG). To facilitate interagency relationships, NORTHCOM has liaisons from more than 60 federal and non-federal agencies at Peterson AFB, Colorado. Liaisons provide subject matter expertise and direct lines of communication with their parent organizations. Some non-DOD agencies represented include the Central Intelligence Agency, FAA, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Geological Survey, as well as several Department of Homeland Security (DHS) organizations such as Customs and Border Patrol, FEMA, Immigration and Customs

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[14] Online at [http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html#SJFHQN].

[15] Ibid.

[16] "NORTHCOM Agency Helps Civil Authorities Prepare for WMD Events," *US Fed News*, January, 10, 2007.

[17] Testimony of Commander, Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region, Major General Guy C. Swan III, before the House Committee on Government Reform, July 21, 2006.

Enforcement, and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).[18] The JIACG also does focused planning on specific issues with potential nationwide impact. For example, in August 2006, representatives from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) met with members of the JIACG to ensure a mutually supporting effort and eliminate redundancy in responding to potential pandemic flu.[19]

Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DOD has 65 personnel working in the DHS, and senior officials from both organizations meet daily at the principal and deputy level.[20] There are also NORTHCOM personnel assigned to DHS components such as the Defense Coordinating Officers in FEMA regions. Through a memorandum of understanding, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has 20 personnel serving on the NORTHCOM headquarters staff facilitating regular discussions for maritime homeland defense roles and responsibilities.[21]

National Guard Bureau (NGB). Although the NGB is a DOD organization, most national guard forces report to their state leadership unless federalized. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, NORTHCOM and the NGB took steps to improve coordination with and oversight of National Guard forces serving in state and federal roles. These steps include a formal policy on command, control, and communications; an advisory board to expedite solutions for improving information sharing; and more than 87 NORTHCOM mobile training team visits to demonstrate collaborative tools to the NGB joint operations center and state-level guard headquarters.[22]

National Level Exercises (NLE). DOD participation in NLEs include exercises that evaluate DOD linkages to homeland security through Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) and homeland defense. NORTHCOM, DOD's combatant command that has primary responsibility for DSCA, conducts exercises to train and evaluate its DSCA capabilities at the direction of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS).

In 2007, for example, exercise Ardent Sentry consisted of scenarios that involved the detonation of a 10-kiloton improvised nuclear device, a hurricane, and several events in Alaska in exercise Northern Edge.[23] For NLE 1-08, NORTHCOM

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[18] Testimony of Commander, U.S. Northern Command, Admiral Timothy J. Keating, before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 14, 2006.

[19] "USNORTHCOM Hosts Work Group for Pandemic Influenza Planning," *US Fed News*, August 25, 2006.

[20] Interview with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, Paul McHale, in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 40, 1st Quarter 2006, p. 11.

[21] Testimony of Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen, before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security on September 7, 2006.

[22] Testimony of Commander, U.S. Northern Command, Admiral Timothy J. Keating, before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves on May 3, 2006.

[23] Fact Sheet, Exercise Ardent Sentry - Northern Edge 2007, online at
(continued...)

and NORAD conducted Vigilant Shield 08 (VS 08) to test the ability of the military to provide DSCA in response to a scenario whose main event was the explosion of radiological dispersion devices in Guam, Oregon, and Arizona.[24] As part of NLE 2-08, Ardent Sentry 08 tested DOD's ability to provide DSCA in response to terrorist attacks in the Pacific Northwest and a hurricane striking the mid-Atlantic states.[25]

International Security Cooperation

In addition to its homeland defense and civil support missions, the NORTHCOM area of responsibility includes both Canada and Mexico. As such, NORTHCOM facilitates security cooperation with both nations.

Canada. In December 2002, Canada and the United States established a Bi-national Planning Group at NORAD/NORTHCOM headquarters to review theater cooperation in the post 9/11 security environment. The 50-person military team dissolved in May 2006 after submitting a final report with 62 recommendations.[26] Some recommendations, like authority for WMD teams to cross the border, will require legislative action to be effective. However, most, like protocols for information sharing between NORAD, NORTHCOM, and Canada Command,[27] could be orchestrated under existing laws or within NORAD agreement.[28]

In February 2008, military leaders from NORTHCOM and Canada Command agreed to a Civil Assistance Plan. The Civil Assistance Plan "allows the military from one nation to support the armed forces of the other nation during a civil emergency" and is expected to "facilitate military-to-military support of civil authorities once government authorities have agreed on an appropriate response."[29] NORTHCOM and Canada Command leaders view the agreement as an opportunity to collaboratively synchronize each nation's military operational plans to support

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[23] (...continued)
[http://www.northcom.mil/News/2007/ AS-07_fact_sheet.pdf].

[24] Exercise Summary Report: National Level Exercise 1-08 (Vigilant Shield 08), North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, January 25, 2008, 1.

[25] Fact Sheet, USNORTHCOM Portion of NLE 2-08, March7, 2008, provided to CRS by USNORTHCOM Public Affairs Office.

[26] Bi-National Planning Group, "The Final Report on Canada and the United States (CANUS) Enhanced Military Cooperation," March 13, 2006 at [http://canada.usembassy.gov/content/can_usa/bpg_finalreport_040606.pdf].

[27] Canada Command was established by the Canadian government on February 1, 2006, to focus on Canadian domestic operations and to offer a single military point of contact for all Canadian domestic and continental defense issues and Canadian security partners.

[28] "Canadian-US Planning Group calls for C4 cooperation," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, April 26, 2006, vol. 218, no. 18.

[29] U.S. Northern Command Press Release, "U.S. Northern Command, Canada Command Establish New Bilateral Civil Assistance Plan," February 14, 2008, online at [http://www.northcom.mil/News/2008/021408.html].

each countries lead federal agencies — the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety Canada — following events such as "floods, forest fires, hurricanes, earthquakes and effects of a terrorist attack."[30]

In addition to coordinating operational plans, the commanders of NORTHCOM and Canada Command and their staffs meet regularly, collaborate on contingency planning, and participate in related annual exercises. Further, Canada has linked some of its exercises with the U.S. National Level Exercise (NLE) schedule. For example, during NLE 2-08, Canadian forces, led by Canada Command, participated in exercise Staunch Maple where they were faced with a mass casualty scenario associated with a simulated explosion and a pandemic flu outbreak aboard a Canadian ship in a Canadian port.[31]

Mexico. Theater security cooperation with Mexico is limited to anti-drug trafficking operations and senior officer visits with Mexican counterparts. The former is a continuation of JTF-6 interactions, while the latter has proven difficult because the Mexican defense establishment lacks a natural entry point for combatant command level engagement. Mexican defense leaders have historically interacted with the Office of the Secretary of Defense because Mexico was not assigned to a combatant command's AOR.[32]

Issues for Congress

During deliberations on the FY2009 defense authorization legislation, some NORTHCOM issues for Congress may include DOD reorganization and the Unified Command Plan (UCP), NORTHCOM's interagency relationships, NORTHCOM's reliance on reserve component forces, the ongoing Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center realignment, and the allocation of resources necessary for NORTHCOM to successfully plan for and execute its assigned missions.

Unified Command Plan (UCP)

Congress approved DOD's request for a 10th assistant secretary of defense to facilitate the reorganization of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD [P]). The conference report for the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (P.L. 109-364) expressed several concerns about the reorganization, including the Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense inheriting a Western Hemisphere focus.[33] DOD intended for the reorganization to streamline

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[30] Ibid.

[31] U.S. Northern Command Press Release, "NORAD, USNORTHCOM Wrap up Participation in NLE 2-08," May 9, 2008, online at [http://www.northcom.mil/news/2008/050908.html].

[32] John A. Cope, "A Prescription for Protecting the Southern Approach," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 42, 3rd quarter 2006, p. 19.

[33] Conference Report on H.R. 5122, "John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for (continued...)

combatant command interactions with OUSD (P). However, the proposed reorganization appears to create more rather than fewer entry points to navigate. For example, the Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense and Americas Affairs, as well as the new Assistant Secretary for Global Security Policy, both appear to have NORTHCOM interests. Likewise, DOD has currently filled only three of five Assistant Secretary billets within OUSD (P). As DOD reorganizes its policy staff, some may call for major changes to the UCP. After only five years in existence, NORTHCOM's geographic AOR continues to be refined. A May 2006 revision of the UCP shifted the Aleutian Islands from PACOM to NORTHCOM while moving Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands from NORTHCOM to SOUTHCOM.[34] There may be merit to further examining combatant command boundaries, particularly between NORTHCOM and U.S. Southern and Pacific Commands.

Interagency Relationships

Based on Hurricane Katrina lessons learned, DOD and DHS have taken several steps to improve coordination. Several NORTHCOM components have been assigned missions that focus on military assistance to civil authorities. Likewise, NORTHCOM continues to make tangible efforts to improve cooperation and coordination with National Guard forces, as well as key partners like FEMA. Reportedly, NORTHCOM, NGB, and FEMA partnered to purchase 22 identical deployable cellular communication systems to improve coordinated emergency response capability.[35]

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study concluded in April 2008 examined ongoing coordination efforts between NORTHCOM, the NGB, and states, while identifying gaps in NORTHCOM's efforts.[36] The GAO found a number of ongoing efforts designed to improve NORTHCOM's civil support capacity to include the following:[37]

- State participation in NORTHCOM exercises enhances coordination.
- Including the NGB in the development of NORTHCOM plans provides National Guard perspective.

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[33] (...continued)
Fiscal Year 2007," p. H8426.

[34] "Bush Approves Update to Unified Command Plan, Assigns New Missions," *Inside Missile Defense*, vol. 12, June 7, 2006.

[35] Bob Brewin, "Northcom Beefs up Emergency Response: New Organization Structure Brings NGOs & Private Sector into Command Center," *Federal Computer Week*, December 18, 2006.

[36] GAO-08-252, "Homeland Defense: Steps Have Been Taken to Improve U.S. Northern Command's Coordination with States and the National Guard Bureau, but Gaps Remain," April 2008, pp. 3-4.

[37] Ibid, pp. 17-21.

- NORTHCOM's Joint Force Orientation Program for state Adjutants General and their respective staffs provides information on NORTHCOM's civil support role to states.
- NORTHCOM's hurricane and wildfire conferences are beginning to build effective relationships between participants.
- NORTHCOM has improved relationships with state and local officials by locating Defense Coordinating Officers in FEMA regional offices.

However, the GAO also identified three remaining gaps in the coordination between NORTHCOM, states, and the NGB:[38]

- NORTHCOM only minimally involves states in the development of homeland defense and civil support plans.
- NORTHCOM was not familiar with state emergency response plans and has no process for obtaining this information.
- The roles and responsibilities between NORTHCOM and the NGB for planning for homeland defense and civil support are not clearly defined.

As such, the GAO recommended the Secretary of Defense:[39]

- Direct NORTHCOM to develop a thorough process to guide coordination with states to include provisions that (1) involve states in NORTHCOM's planning process, and (2) obtains and incorporates information on state emergency response plans and capabilities into the development and execution of NORTHCOM plans.
- Direct NORTHCOM and the NGB to formally develop an agreement that clearly defines roles and responsibilities for NORTHCOM, the NGB, and the NORTHCOM National Guard Office.

In response to the GAO recommendations, DOD stated that a revised Memorandum of Agreement between NORTHCOM and the NGB was in coordination. However, DOD only partially concurred with the first recommendation. While DOD agreed with the need for a more thorough planning process, DOD believes the process must include U.S. Pacific and Southern Commands in addition to NORTHCOM. Further, DOD stated that Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, Annex 1, requires DHS to produce and Integrated Planning System (IPS). DOD added that NORTHCOM, the NGB, the Joint Staff, and Office of Secretary of Defense staffs are coordinating with DHS to develop an IPS.[40]

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[38] Ibid, pp. 23-33.

[39] Ibid, p. 34.

[40] Ibid, p. 47.

A separate GAO report completed in April 2008 also examined NORTHCOM's interagency relationships. The report found that NORTHCOM had taken a number of steps to improve interagency coordination and concluded that

> NORTHCOM's federal interagency coordination efforts have helped address some of the uncertainty in the homeland defense and civil support planning process and have improved NORTHCOM's ability to coordinate in the event of actual incidents.[41]

However, the GAO found that NORTHCOM lacks formal procedures to ensure that integrated planning will be fully adopted.[42] As such, the GAO recommended that DOD and NORTHCOM in coordination with other appropriate federal agencies develop clear guidance for interagency planning efforts and document agreements for interagency planning groups within the construct of the Integrated Planning System. DOD concurred with this GAO recommendation.[43]

Seeking to continue to strengthen relationships between DHS and DOD, the 2008 NDAA directs the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, to determine what military-unique capabilities DOD provides that are necessary to support civil authorities during national catastrophic incidents. Additionally, the 2008 NDAA (P.L. 110-181) directs DOD to budget for additional requirements deemed necessary to conduct civil support missions.[44]

With the focus on interagency coordination, some are calling for legislation to codify processes with something similar to the Goldwater-Nichols Act that reorganized DOD. The 2007 NDAA directed the President to provide Congress a report on improving interagency support.[45] While the report focused on better DOD and civilian executive branch integration, homeland security also requires cooperation across the full spectrum of federal, state, and local agencies.[46] Likewise, some question the advisability of creating additional layers at the federal level, as it may make it more complicated for state and local authorities to interact with federal agencies.

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[41] GAO-08-251, "Homeland Defense: U.S. Northern Command Has Made Progress but Needs Force Allocations, Readiness Tracking Gaps, and Other Issues," April 2008, pp.35, 40.

[42] Ibid, pp. 40-42.

[43] Ibid, p. 57.

[44] H.Rept. 110-477, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585, Section 1815, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY2008," pp. 500-501.

[45] P.L. 106-364, Sec. 1035.

[46] "Report on Improving Interagency Support for United States 21st Century National Security Missions and Interagency Operations in Support of Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations: Report to Congress Submitted Consistent with Section 1035, of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (P.L. 109-364)," June 2007, o-line at [http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/downloads/Signed_1035_Report.pdf].

Increased Reliance on Reserve Components

Nearly 150 reserve and national guard members staff NORTHCOM headquarters, including five general officers. Its Air Force and Marine Components are reserve commands that have full-time missions; JTF-CS is primarily a reserve organization, and JTF-N relies on reserve component units to conduct operations. Likewise, the National Command Region's Integrated Air Defense System is operated by National Guard forces in Title 10 status, and since 9/11 over 70% of the nation's air defense sorties have been flown by reserve component forces.[47] Recent trends indicate NORTHCOM will increase reliance on reserve component forces to support civil authorities. Reserve component forces are also deploying overseas in large numbers for other combatant commanders. As mobilizations continue and homeland security missions increase, more reserve component forces are serving in full-time status.

Some are concerned homeland defense may create near- and long-term resource issues for the reserve components prompting many governors to question whether they will have sufficient National Guard forces available to accomplish state missions. As such, the 2008 NDAA (P.L. 110-181) requires DOD in consultation with DHS, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, NORTHCOM, and the NGB to prepare and submit a plan to Congress for coordinating the use of National Guard and members of the Armed Forces in response to natural and man-made disasters by June 1, 2008.[48] Additionally, the 2008 NDAA (P.L. 110-181) requires the President to establish a bipartisan Council of Governors to advise DOD, DHS, and the White House Homeland Security Council regarding the use of the National Guard and civil support missions.[49]

Some believe that because of the National Guard's unique dual status, the NORTHCOM deputy commander should be a National Guard officer. This issue was initially deferred to the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. The Commission recommended that either the commander or deputy commander of NORTHCOM be filled by a reserve component officer, but it recommended against adding a second deputy commander billet to allow both active duty and reserve component representation at the deputy level.[50] The 2008 NDAA (P.L. 110-181) requires that either the commander or at least one deputy commander billet at NORTHCOM be filled with a National Guard officer.[51]

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[47] Testimony of Commander, U.S. Northern Command, Admiral Timothy J. Keating, before the Commission on National Guard and Reserves on May 3, 2006.

[48] H.Rept. 110-477, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585, Section 1814, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY2008," pp. 499-500.

[49] H.Rept. 110-477, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585, Section 1822, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY2008," p. 501.

[50] Commission on National Guard and Reserves, *Second Report to Congress,* March 1, 2007, pp. xv-xvi.

[51] H.Rept. 110-477, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585, Section 1824, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY2008," p. 502.

Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center

In July 2006, NORTHCOM announced the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center (CMOC) was undergoing an 18-month transition with day-to-day operations moving from the underground complex 15 miles west of Peterson to a combined NORAD/NORTHCOM Command Center at Peterson. The Cold War vintage facility will remain in a "standby" status and be used for exercises or contingencies. NORTHCOM believes the combined command center will increase unity of effort and operational effectiveness, enabling an effective response to a full spectrum of threats.[52] However, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has voiced concern over costs, as well as incomplete analyses of security implications and operational effects of the proposed moves.[53]

To address the concerns, the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 110-181) stipulates funding for the CMOC realignment upon the DOD submitting a report to Congress that compares the cost of relocation with anticipated operational benefits, details functions that will remain at CMOC and maintain connectivity with functions that transfer out of CMOC, outlines plans for the relocation of NORAD, and explains the results of and independent security and vulnerability assessment of the new command center at Peterson AFB, Colorado, along with DOD plans, costs, and schedules for mitigating identified risks. The report is due to Congress on March 1, 2008. After the report is submitted, GAO has 120 days to submit to Congress a review of DOD's report. Finally, by March 16, 2008, the Secretary of the Air Force must submit a master recapitalization plan for Cheyenne Mountain Air Station.[54]

Resource Availability

An April 2008 GAO study examined availability of personnel available to NORTHCOM to both plan for and execute assigned missions. The GAO found that NORTHCOM planning positions are staffed at relatively high levels in comparison with other geographic combatant commands, and that NORTHCOM officials believed they possessed adequate numbers of planning personnel.[55] On the other hand, the GAO questioned whether DOD has assigned adequate numbers of forces to NORTHCOM to execute assigned missions.

The GAO found that unlike other geographic combatant commands within DOD, DOD has only routinely assigned air defense and supporting forces to NORTHCOM. As a result, the GAO asserted that

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[52] Armed Forces Press Service, "NORAD, NORTHCOM Personnel to Move," July 31, 2006.

[53] GAO, *Defense Infrastructure: Full Costs and Security Implications of Cheyenne Mountain Realignment Have Not Been Determined,* GAO-07-803R, Washington DC, May 21, 2007, p. 4.

[54] H.Rept. 110-477, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1585, Section 361, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY2008," pp. 77-78.

[55] GAO-08-251, "Homeland Defense: U.S. Northern Command Has Made Progress but Needs Force Allocations, Readiness Tracking Gaps, and Other Issues," April 2008, pp.35, 31.

> The lack of units specifically identified to execute NORTHCOM's plans may increase the level of risk to homeland defense or civil support operations in terms of the availability of a sufficient number of personnel with the appropriate level of training and equipment for conducting the domestic mission.[56]

In addition, the GAO found that NORTHCOM's ability to monitor the readiness of forces to respond to civil support missions is hampered because few units have been identified for this mission.[57] As such, the GAO recommended that DOD assign forces to NORTHCOM and require NORTHCOM to develop deployment timelines for each of its major operational plans.[58] In response, DOD agreed that certain specialized forces, such as those trained to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive attacks, should be regularly assigned to NORTHCOM. However, DOD believes that readiness for civil support missions can be improved by developing civil support readiness metrics for general purpose forces.[59]

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[56] Ibid, p. 27.

[57] Ibid, pp. 27-30.

[58] Ibid, p. 44.

[59] Ibid, pp. 45-46.